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Holocaust & Beyond My Memoirs

By Ed Lichtman



PREFACE

I was robbed. The Holocaust (1) robbed me of my youth, robbed me of having parents, and robbed me of having friends. More specifically the robbers were the Germans. Even now, 68 years later, I cannot forgive them.

Over the years, several people have asked me to write about my experiences during World War II. For a long time I resisted on the grounds that the story might be short and boring for I do not remember much. As I am writing my story, I certainly realize that I remember very little. What I do remember, however, may be of interest to future generations of the Lichtmann family descendents and anyone else who happen to come across these pages.

Dobromil, Poland 1935-1941

Who am I? My old Polish passport says Edmund Lichtmann born July 20th, 1935 in Dobromil, Poland. So, I am Polish? But since Dobromil has been in Ukraine since 1990 ... does that make me Ukrainian? Then, there is a little voice in the back of my head that says that I was really born in a hospital in Przemysl - 10 miles west of Dobromil and to this day is still in Poland. Does that count?

Furthermore, in 1957, when I became a US citizen, I changed my identity to: Edmond David Lichtman. I thought "Edmund" sounded too German, my last name was long enough without the double 'n', and to fit in with the Americans, I gave myself a middle name 'David' – after my grandfather. Years later, I found out my grandfather's name was actually SAMUEL.

Dobromil, located about 100 miles south-west of Lvov, is a small village that apparently has a history that started in 1374. It even has a Coat of Arms (2). Saul Miller describes it as a "little shtetl of Galitsia" that lays "... in a setting of natural beauty ... a valley ... ringed around with lofty green hills, with bountiful orchards, with flower gardens, an atmosphere fragrant with bracing fresh air." (3) This poetic picture of Dobromil seems to be supported by the following two pictures. They capture the lumber mill and surrounding scenery taken 100 years apart.



The Samuel Lichtmann (my grandfather) Lumber mill (around 1918).

The house in the front is where Grandpa Samuel and Grandma Sara raised 9 children: 6 sons and 3 daughters.



Now it is a furniture factory
Photo by Jonathan S. Lichtman (my son) 2007

The Lichtmann family owned the lumber mill. It was famous for producing orange crates that were exported throughout Europe. I have been told that all the sons worked in the lumber mill in various capacities; my father was the general manager and the “engineer.” He did not have a college degree; just a good analytical mind. I like to think I take after him.

To my knowledge the Lichtmann family still owns that property – the Ukrainians simply forgot to pay us rent. Jonathan, during his recent visit wisely did not ask for the rent – the Ukrainians are very touchy about that subject.



The Lichtmann Family before 1935 (I am not in it)

Of the 15 in this picture only four survived the Holocaust: Grandmother Sara, my father Joseph (2nd from left), aunt Bronia, and aunt Mania. (A partial family tree is enclosed.)

This is the only picture remaining of both my parents and I:



Aunt Bronia told me that the picture on the left was prominently displayed in the window of Dobromil's photographer. "You were as pretty as Shirley Temple." She said. I think she meant it as a compliment.

Again I have few independent memories of Dobromil:

I am at home, happily swinging, sitting in a chair hanging in the doorway.

Again at home, every one is very tense – including the doctor that was called for this emergency: I swallowed a coin. Sometime later everyone is relieved to see that I passed the coin!

I am at the lumber mill merrily playing with other children very close to a narrow (2 to 3 foot) channel of fast running water – most likely part of the mill operation.

They stopped the car. I am embarrassed and quickly walk to the side of the road to barf.

In 1939 Hitler and Stalin divided Poland in two and each annexed their respective portion. Dobromil fell under Russian rule. Then on June 22, 1941 Dobromil was captured by the Germans as Hitler's armies marched to conquer all of Russia. It was during this period - 1939 to 1941 - that my parents decided to leave Dobromil and move to the large city of Lvov. I do not know why or when. One theory is that it was under the Russian occupation: the Russians did not like us, the "Capitalists" and made it hard for the lumber mill to function.

Lvov, Poland – early 1942

My mind and feelings started freezing the day my mother asked the German officer “Herr Kapitän, kann mein Sohn nach Hause gehen, seinem Vater zu erklären, daß Sie mich wegnehmen?” (Captain, may my son go home to tell his father that you are taking me away?)

You may wonder why she spoke German? I found the answer only recently as part of my research for these memoirs: Poland was part of the Austrian empire until 1918 – she and everyone of her generation probably had to learn German in school.

I was almost seven years old at the time. My mother and I were visiting my aunt for the purpose of saying goodbye. We were going into hiding: leaving Lvov to live in a village with a Catholic lady and posing as Edmund and Mathida Trzebinski - two gentiles - presumably related to that lady. My father, who looked too Jewish to pass for a Catholic was to remain in Lvov with plans to hide in the home of a Catholic family in total isolation. Like all Jews in Lvov, we lived inside the ghetto. In 1941 the Germans partitioned a section of the town and forced 106,000 Jews to live there and wear a Star of David armband (1). In hindsight, the idea of the ghetto turned out to be Hitler’s first step toward total destruction of the Jewish race.



At this time we were still able to go in and out of the ghetto freely, but because of rumors of it closing soon, my father had decided that it was time for us to go into hiding.

However, my aunt and her three-year old daughter were living outside the ghetto; somehow they managed to get Costa Rican passports. I remember a multi-room sunny flat on the second floor of a large building with stairs leading to an inner circular balcony that had access to all the apartments.

The German officer wanted that apartment for himself. Apparently it was necessary for him to arrest my aunt to accomplish his goal – we just happened to be there at this unfortunate time. So when my mother asked the German to let me go, he agreed without any hesitation. My mother quickly took me to the side and said “Eduszku, kohanie, (Ed, my love) go home, tell tatushku (father) what happened here and please, please remember to tell him that I dropped our false documents behind the trunk in cioci (aunt’s) bedroom.” That is the last time I saw my mother.

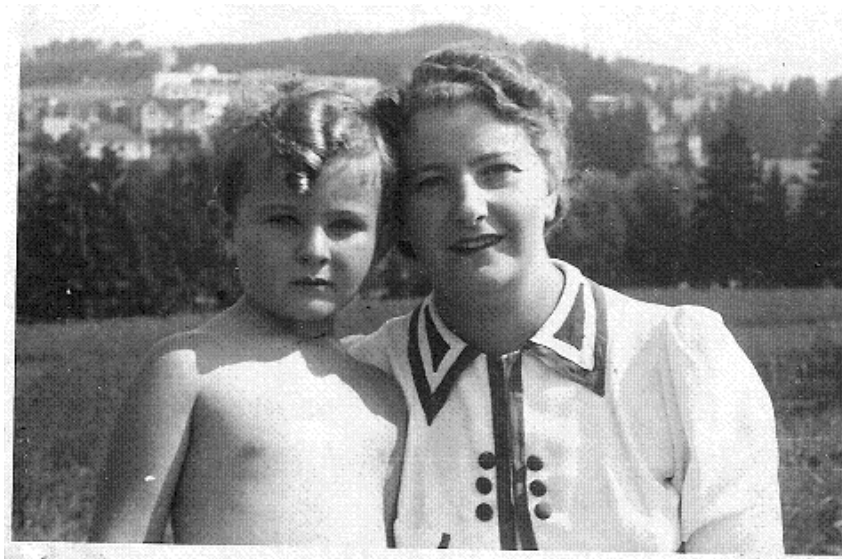
With time I completely lost the ability to visualize her features and my memory of her is limited to only three earlier incidents:

It is evening, mother and I are walking arm-in-arm, each arm carefully hiding the other's Star of David armband. I am very aware that we are walking past the curfew for Jews. But if caught, the punishment would not be as severe as not having the armband on.

Mother and I are standing in a long line in front of a store waiting to purchase sugar.

I am in a playground; I have sprained or broken my arm on a slide. My mother is there to help me with my pain.

Not only is my memory limited to these incidents but it is void of color, void of emotion, void of sounds, void of smells. It is as though I read these facts in a book that had nothing to do with me. I truly envy people that have vivid wonderful memories of their childhood. Still I feel grateful to my mother for saving my life with her quick thinking when she asked the German to let me go. I feel grateful to her for instilling in me that soft and loving part that she was famous for – according to my two aunts that survived the War and knew her well. I also learned from these aunts that she was an attorney – a most unusual occupation for a woman in those days. From my father, who died in 1950, I inherited four pictures of my mother (one I found in his wallet) that I did not know he had. This one probably dates back to 1940 when I was 5 years old.



Somehow I made it to our apartment and told my father what had happened. I know that I was unaware that my mother was in danger of losing her life or for that matter that there was a War on. To me this was all normal – the way life is.

I do not recall any conversations and only three memories:

I am sitting on the stool in the toilet. The bathroom is located just left of the entry to our apartment. My father tells me through the closed door: "Do not push, let it flow by itself"

A table with lots of semi-finished brushes; my parents are assembling brushes and I am "helping".

It is night time; I am alone in our apartment with some lights on. Some one is yelling that our lights are showing. They were supposed to be blacked out by curtains. I walk to the balcony in the hope of catching someone's attention in my cousin's apartment in another complex a long distance away. This time, I do remember being scared.

My next recollection: I am in a village somewhere in Poland.

A Polish village 1942 -1945

It was so easy. He was my age – about seven years old – and the village idiot: there was something strange about his clothes and his perpetual smile but most of all I remember the constant cruel teasing from other boys that he seemed to enjoy. He had what I needed: a belt. I talked him into giving it to me. What is not so easy is to forget taking it from him, even now, 66 years later. How do I forgive myself? What can I do to compensate for that awful deed? Nothing! Over the years, I have done many good deeds – I have been dubbed Don Quixote – but when placed on a see saw, my good deeds can never outweigh that belt.

I cannot even go back to that village – not that I want to – I do not know its name. It is somewhere in Poland. Recently I had a chance to ask someone, but did I not. My memory of the village is like a blurred vision of a room in a museum full of pictures: some clear but most just impressions, none that I would want to revisit.

I will call her aunt Helena for I do not remember her real name even though I lived with her for over three years and she saved my life. She was “tall” and “older”, an ex-school teacher – I think - for while in the village I never attended school; she taught me arithmetic, reading and writing. Aunt Helena was Catholic and I, a Jew, was passing as her nephew. If anyone had told the Germans that she was harboring a Jew, she would have been executed. Several scary pictures come to mind:

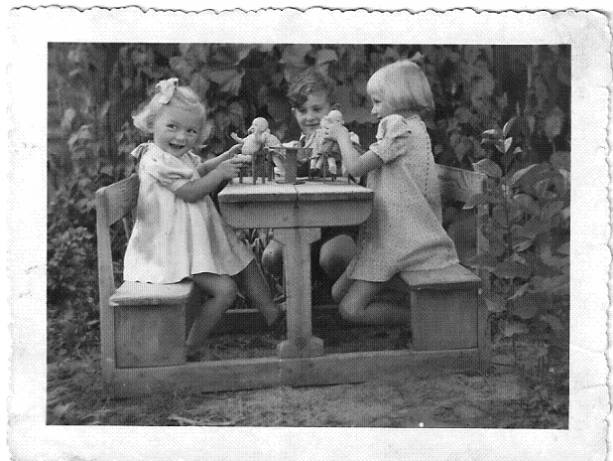
It is Sunday and it is very cold outside. I am wearing a hat as we go to church. My hat is still on my head as I sit in the pew. Helena pulls my hat off with eyes full of fear and disapproval.

*On my first Christmas Eve in the village, Helena and I are visiting the family next door and as we stand before the Christmas tree I tell everyone that in **my** house we never celebrated Christmas. The next day we are on the train back to Lvov. Helena, fearing for her life, wants to give me back to my father. Fortunately, she cannot find him so we return to the village.*

I am not allowed to play with other boys. It would have been fatal if the boys got curious or just innocently saw my circumcised penis while I was peeing. At that time only the Jews were circumcised.

It looks like it was OK to play with girls – as captured in this picture, dated 1942 – the only picture of that period.

I remember hunting for mushrooms and finding a lot of them: the white ones in the prairie – usually under cow dung - and the brown one in the woods. Neither Poland nor I ever heard of poisonous mushrooms at that time.



I also hunted for mice - or was it rats? In the cellar, armed with a long wooden stick I am poking, possibly killing the mice that are racing through our winter potato storage.

Above that cellar is the room where I sleep. A thick down comforter made of silky material is keeping me warm provided I tuck it under me to prevent from sliding. At night, as I turn around I must re-tuck or freeze. There is another problem that disturbs my sleep: I wet my bed quite frequently. Then I have to find a dry spot on my bed and rearrange the comforter to avoid the wet area that was tucked under me.

The bed wetting continued till I was a sophomore in college. Maybe it was due to the fact that the outhouse was quite a walk from my room. Actually I made that walk quite shorter. I would go out of my room walk down 5 steps, make a left, walk 10 feet and pee on the side of the house onto the tomato patch. You see it was my responsibility to water the tomatoes. I remember thinking, but not quite believing, the Polish equivalent of “killing two birds with one stone”. Helena never found out why the tomatoes did not grow.

While I am confessing my sins, it may be true that I drowned a cat by dropping her in the well that supplied our drinking water. That is a very, very fuzzy memory. How can it be? That would have contaminated the water. This is one of the memories I cannot trust and yet it left an imprint like the roadway sign that I barely noticed when driving at 70 mph.

I started my first small business venture in that village: repairing scrub brushes. I had the perfect business plan: zero investment, a product that every one needed and no competition. The floors of all houses were wooden and needed a periodic hard scrubbing with a brush. In time the bristles would wear out. That is where I came in with a bag full of goose feathers that I collected in the surrounding farms and stripped to the vane. I disassembled their brush, threw out the old bristles and inserted the new ones. I learned my trade at home, in Lvov, while “helping” my parents who were at that time manufacturing brushes for a living. I wish I could remember how much I was paid or what I did with the profits. Another blank memory.



Towards the end of the war our village became a battle ground. The Russians repelled the Germans then a day later the Germans came back. We heard noises in the next door vacant apartment. Fearing that Russians are hiding there and if found we would be blamed, Helena invites the Germans to inspect our home. They found no one but two very frightened people: Helena and me.

It's 1945. The war is raging to the west of us but the village is occupied by the Russians. I still may not reveal to anyone that I am Jewish but I feel safe. The soldiers smile at me, they let me ride in the back of their motorcycle. I quickly learn to speak Russian. I am waiting to hear from my parents ...and waiting ... and waiting.

The war is over now and still no news. I can wait no longer. I leave the village to try and find my parents. Apparently I did not get too far because my next recollection is: I am back in Helena's house looking out the window and seeing a stranger approaching our door. She is a short lady about 35 years old with a bandage on her nose. I had never seen her before but I knew she was coming for me. Indeed, my father sent her – my cousin Dela - to take me to him. He was now in Krakow sharing an apartment with Dela, and her daughter Ruth. I asked her about my mother. She said I would have to ask my father. Dela, although happy to see me, was not in a good mood: she had just hurt her nose (permanent scar) on the train ride from Krakow.

I remember neither the ride to Krakow nor my good byes to Helena. To this day I still do not understand why I felt no warmth or gratitude towards Helena. She was definitely not mean to me and she risked her life to save mine. At the time I did not know that I had such things as feelings - only rational thoughts - but my actions spoke clearly when a few weeks later my father asked me to do something nice for Helena, I said “Nie” (no). I do not remember what he asked me to do but I do remember resisting it – saying “Nie” to my father was unprecedented.

How was Helena compensated? I do not know; it is possible - only a vague memory of some conversation - that she received shares of stocks when I first arrived.

Krakow, Poland 1945 -1946

Dela brings me to my new home: an apartment in Krakow. As she opens the door there is my father. He hugs me warmly and I am happy to see him. "Where is mamusia (mother)?" I immediately inquire. "Mamusia did not survive the war and this is the last time we will speak about her." And it was. Someone in the family later told me that she was killed by the Germans. How or when I never found out. I am not sure if my father ever knew.

In Krakow a new, "normal", life begins for me. At first there are four us: myself, father, Dela (who I call 'aunt' because of her age) and her daughter Ruth who is the same age as I. Later Ron (at the time we called him "Romek" - aunt Bronia's son) who is one year younger joins us.

My father is busy trying to make a living. He is into the "black market" selling cartons of cigarettes. I know because those cartons are stored under the couch that serves as my bed. I was told that he was quite resourceful when it came to making money. After getting out of hiding, his original source of money was his own suit that he re-sewed as a child's suit. Of course I did not hear that from him nor does he talk to me about his experiences in hiding. I do not remember what we talked about – if anything. All I remember is that he is very strict and hardly ever at home.

However, I look forward to Sundays. That is the day that we walk, hand in hand, around the big square in Krakow and we have "cassata" - a large wedge of multi-color, multi-flavor ice cream - while he talks to friends about business.

These are basically happy days. I am attending school, collecting leaves and drying them for storage in a special book. The three of us (Ruth, Ron and I) walk with Dela while "fighting" for one of her two hands. In retrospect I was unconscious. I did not even know or did not remember that Krakow had a huge royal castle that was visible from every part of town.

I certainly was not conscious of the fact that we were waiting for World War III to start: Russia vs. the Allies. In my father's mind that was inevitable. Our lives, our furnished apartment, our town were all temporary. With that in mind, one day we packed, and took the train out of Poland. (At this point Ron had joined his mother in Wroclaw, a town in western Poland where she was operating a deli.)

We stop a few days in Prague, Czechoslovakia where we celebrate the marriage of Dela to Henri Barash, a prior employee of the Lichtmann Lumber Mill.

Waiting for World War III 1946 – 1951

We arrive in Paris and live in a hotel for a while. My father's first priority was to find a job. Not so easy in a country that requires a work permit that is impossible for a foreigner to obtain and you do not speak the language.

The Barash family somehow settles in Paris. I am whisked away to a Jewish boarding school outside of Paris. Again I have very fuzzy memories except for the deep feeling of being lonesome and the feeling of not belonging – perhaps because I did not speak French. I do not recall ever seeing my father – just an occasional visit with Dela.

We sang Hebrew songs.

I was still wetting my bed. Perhaps that is why I had a private room.

I have only one fun memory: playing "doctor" with a little girl in that room. (At the time I had no idea why this was fun.) The fun did not last; she betrayed me by telling the other boys and they teased me.

Within a few months of arriving in Paris, we were out of there and in Brussels, Belgium. My father somehow managed to befriend two Jewish, Belgian citizens (Baumgarten & Lieberman) and they formed a partnership. The Jewish was important for communication: Yiddish was their common language. And being citizens they were allowed to work; my father had no work permit. They opened an Army Surplus store. I remember their most popular item: a "Churchill" jacket, green with multiple pockets in front. Within a year or so, the "surplus" dried up so they started manufacturing the garments and selling them to other stores. It became a big enterprise with a subsidiary in France.

The store was located one block away from our apartment so I was there quite often "helping." One time when my father had been ill for several weeks, I decided to "help" even more to compensate for his absence. It was Sunday, no one in the facility, I went upstairs where they cut the material for shipment to the seamsters. There, covering the length of the 30 foot table was material all neatly marked up (with chalk) to represent the various parts of trench coats of various sizes. I knew the next step was cutting with an electric garment cutter. This is the battery powered successor to the cutter I used.



I proudly and meticulously cut out the multitude pieces being careful to follow the chalk marks. The next day I was informed that I cut the *pattern*; the purpose of the pattern is to lay it on top of a stack of material so that as many as 50 garments can be cut at a time.

When we first arrived in Brussels we stayed in a rented room with my father and I sleeping together in a large bed. That arrangement did not work; I was still a bed wetter. Somehow, my father engineered a solution. One of the solutions was that I did not see him many a night. During those nights, it turned out he was in Antwerp courting my future step mother: Lucia.

During my father's absences I think the landlady who lived in the same building was in charge of me - another fuzzy memory. However, I do clearly remember my frequent walks through a street that had several store fronts with unusual window decorations: scantily clad ladies smiling at all passersby.

Another solution was yet another boarding school. I'm the tall one, back row 3rd from the right. I remember having a great math teacher. He gave me a good foundation and a liking for math; I might even credit him for giving me the tools necessary for my acceptance to a good college 16 years later. I also suspected him of having inappropriate intentions for me – so I kept a distance from him. I obviously had no idea of what those intentions were but my survival antenna was always up – thanks to my war experiences.



One day father informs me that he met a woman that he plans to marry. He introduces me to Lucia. She is also from Poland and has her own survival story that still weighs heavily on her: she lost her husband and her two daughters in the Holocaust. She informs me right at our first meeting not to expect her to be a mother to me – she no longer has it in her after the loss of her daughters. She certainly kept her promise or warning. My father did get married and I certainly never felt being “mothered” or loved by her.

After the wedding the three of us moved into a furnished apartment where I had my own room. The fact that it was furnished was consistent with my father’s conviction that World War III was just around the corner. Why invest in furniture? He also applied for immigration visas to the United States to be as far away from this new war as possible. This turned out to be the greatest gift he could have left me.

Life in this new environment took on a “normal” rhythm. I attended school where I made a friend: “Bobby”; he was the smartest boy in the school. I had a bicycle. I took tennis lessons. I joined the boy scouts. I was sent to a summer camp by the ocean. Lucia and father took frequent vacations to neighboring countries – without me.



After a few unsuccessful attempts at learning Hebrew for my Bar Mitzvah, father who was not very religious, agreed - to my great relief - for me to skip Bar Mitzvah. We did observe some traditions like gefilte fish or carp for Friday night dinners. I remember my father teaching me how to eat carp without biting into the bones and how expertly he navigated the process of eating the best part of the carp: the head.

Whenever I misbehaved and needed punishment, father would make me stand in the corner of my room facing the wall. I do not recollect what “crimes” I committed but it seems that I faced that wall many a time. A few times I thought I detected a little smile in the corner of his mouth as if to say “I hate to do this, but I have to.”

Perhaps my “crimes” were acting out my negative feelings. It was not until 25 years later that I discovered that I had feelings and that they did not have to be rational. The following memories seem to illustrate that during this “normal” period I was feeling very lonely, unloved and neglected:

Lucia and father were vacationing in the ocean resort town of Knokke, and left me alone in Brussels. I decided to join them by bicycling the 70 mile distance. (N.B. my bicycle had only one gear that also acted as the breaks.) I do not remember the reception I got when I reached my destination.

I am at a children’s vacation camp by the ocean and for some reason decide to go home. So I do: I take the train back to Brussels without telling anyone. This may have been one of the times that I was put in the corner.

I am coming home from a week of camping with the boy scouts. I am tired and hungry. My father and Lucia tell me to help myself to lunch and stand in the doorway watching me go to the window sill where the food was normally kept. Inside, I am fuming. I want to cry out “I am tired, why can you not - for once - feed me?” but I say nothing. I approach the window sill; it is empty. I turn around and see both of them smiling and while pointing to the refrigerator they cry out “Surprise”. This was our first refrigerator. It did not help my original feelings – just rendered me powerless.

Perhaps the most un-rational feelings that I felt very strongly were the feelings of rejection and anger when my only friend Bobby informed me that he and his family were moving out to Australia. How dare he leave me alone?

My father was often sick with what was diagnosed at the time as indigestion. Each time he would recover and move on. This time it was different; he was bed ridden with a very serious heart problem. The doctor, a relative of Lucia, moved in with us in order to take care of him. He, of course, took my room which I (silently) resented immensely. My dad's face was looking thinner and thinner and the energy seemed to have been sucked out of him. One night I was told to sleep in his bed so that I could help if he needed something. I did. The next morning I woke up and noticed that although he was breathing and his eyes were open there was something wrong. He was in a coma. The end was inevitable. I was transferred to the Baumgarten's home to avoid experiencing his death. Indeed it came within a day or so. I remember wanting to cry and could not. I did love my father. I wondered what would become of me. We buried him in Putte, Holland the closest Jewish cemetery available.



**In loving memory of
Joseph Lichtman
Passed away 29 Oct. 1950**

I am 15 years old and in charge of shaping my future.

Lucia, my stepmother, was out of the picture. Within a short time after burying her husband, she tried to commit suicide: her emotions could not take one more death in her life. After her attempted suicide I do not remember if she took herself out of taking care of me or I crossed her off.

So for the time being I am living in the Baumgartens' home; they are very kind to me and I enjoy being with them as well as playing with and babysitting their one and two year olds. I also experience my first crush: Suzy, Mrs. Baumgarten's younger sister. We held hands in the back of the car while the Baumgartens were snickering in the front.

I continue to attend high school: an old building in the medieval section of town, up the street from the famous statue of "Manken Pis". My hardest subjects were: Flemish, English and Gymnastics. It seems that I was a physically inadequate. I was unable to lift myself up a rope or jump a "horse". I also remember trying to run away from a bully and as I was running away he was kicking me. As to Flemish, I was able to get special dispensation when I told the administrator that I was going to the USA. English remained a problem; I think I was flunking the subject.

Aunt Bronia by now had remarried and was living in New York with Ron and Adam, her new husband. She sent me an invitation to come and live with them. I knew she was my father's favorite so I accepted with joy. Two other events happened around the same time: I visited Israel as a potential place to live and my emigration visa was approved (thanks to the foresight of my father). The timing of those three events is not clear to me.

In June 1951, I flew to Israel; it became a nation only three years earlier. There I visited all the tourist places: Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Safed, Haifa, Tiberias, Dead Sea, Masada, Bethlehem. How I got around is quite blurry at this time. Some of it was alone - by bus, some by joining a tour and some with relatives of friends. I visited Lucia who was vacationing in Tel Aviv and she took me to a Dobromil survivors' luncheon. I was the youngest there and to my great disappointment, no one paid any attention to me! In Haifa I met my aunt Gina; a lovely lady who greeted me with love and affection. I even visited a couple of kibbutzim and stayed overnight in one of them where I was fortunate to get a personal tour by a young lady (my age) - a relative of a friend. This was very enlightening to me and helped me bury any thought I had of living in a kibbutz. I realized that I was not meant to live in a setting where my life was controlled by others. As to the rest of Israel, everywhere I went I saw soldiers - men and women - in uniform with their weapons ready for the next war.

I had enough of war!

Back in Brussels I got ready for my departure to New York. I went to Paris to say goodbye to Dela, Henri and Ruth. They were very special to me and I always felt loved by them.

The final arrangements for money were made, whereby Mr. Brandes – a relative of Lucia – negotiated with the partners the amount and payment schedule of my father's share of the business. Lucia and I would each get half. Half of what? I had no idea. It turned out to be just enough to get me through college. Thank you, dad.

In Dec. 1951, after saying goodbye to the few people I knew, I boarded one of the last DP (Displaced Persons) boats to leave for the United States. It was a troop carrier that was now ferrying DPs from every corner of Europe to the shores of America. I enjoyed the ride especially the notoriety after beating the second best player in a chess tournament.

But the best moment was when we reached New York and Aunt Bronia greeted me with open arms. I felt safe at last. It was the end of fearing World War III.

The next few years Aunt Bronia and Uncle Adam gave me a home and the loving that I did not know I was craving so much. And in Ron, I found the friend I always wanted plus the brother that I had secretly wished for

EPILOGUE

A few years after my father died Lucia remarried and lived in London. I really liked her husband whom I met during a summer vacation. Again her marriage did not last long: he died. She was institutionalized and eventually died a very sad and bitter woman.

Today, at the age of 72 I am the oldest surviving Lichtman. I am living a very happy life in our home in Alamo, CA with my loving wife Vibeke. Close by are her children and grandchildren; they are now my family with frequent loving calls of "Grandpa!". Mike's daughters are Kelsi(17) and Shelby (15) . Suzy and her husband Rich have Delaney(9) and Rylan(7).

I visited Poland recently and felt not the slightest attachment to it; United States has become my adopted homeland.

Since coming to the USA, I have worked hard, played hard and learned a lot. Armed with a couple of degrees (BME from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and MBA from New York University) I pursued several careers (Engineer, Contract Administrator, Financial Planner and Real Estate Broker) and retired at the age of 48 to manage my own rental units and to pursue my hobby: programming. I publish accounting software.

Life in the USA was not always smooth. My first trauma in the USA came in 1971 when my first marriage to Marian – the mother of Jonathan – broke up. I was devastated - like being hit with a 2 by 4. It turned out to be my wake up call to go out and learn about feelings, about me, how to listen, and how to interact with others. I attended many courses and seminars. I was reborn. I even lead "encounter" groups to help others become more aware.

Four years after the divorce I became aware that I was not meant to work for companies and charted a course to be financially independent through investing in real estate. My timing was perfect: California real estate continually appreciated and within a few short years I was able to achieve my goal.

Apparently my awareness was not fully developed when I married my second wife. The marriage lasted 2 years. But it turned out for the best; I finally found Vibeke (Vibs), my perfect wife. Vibs and I are friends with Marian and her husband Dave and together often celebrate Jonathan's birthday.

60 years after the Holocaust a Lichtman is again living in Ukraine; Jonathan is working in Kiev, after having married Lena, a Ukrainian lady with an 18 year old son Max. Jonathan traveled to Dobromil in 2007 to take the picture

REFERENCES

(1) A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO HOLOCAUST

Source: <http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/timeline/ghettos.htm>

1939 Hitler incorporated the western part of Poland into Germany according to race doctrine. He intended that Poles were to become the slaves of Germany and that the two million Jews therein were to be concentrated in ghettos in Poland's larger cities. Later this would simplify transport to the death camps. Nazi occupation authorities officially told the story that Jews were natural carriers of all types of diseases, especially typhus, and that it was necessary to isolate Jews from the Polish community. Jewish neighborhoods thus were transformed into prisons. The five major ghettos were located in Warsaw, Łódź, Kraków, Lublin, and Lvov. On November 23, 1939 General Governor Hans Frank issued an ordinance that Jews ten years of age and older living in the General Government had to wear the Star of David on armbands or pinned to the chest or back. This made the identification of Jews easier when the Nazis began issuing orders establishing ghettos.

1940 In total, the Nazis established 356 ghettos in Poland, the Soviet Union, the Baltic States, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Hungary between 1939 and 1945. There was no uniformity to these ghettos. The ghettos in small towns were generally not sealed off, which was often a temporary measure used until the residents could be sent to bigger ghettos.

Larger cities had closed ghettos, with brick or stone walls, wooden fences, and barbed wire defining the boundaries. Guards were placed strategically at gateways and other boundary openings. Jews were not allowed to leave the so-called "Jewish residential districts," under penalty of death.

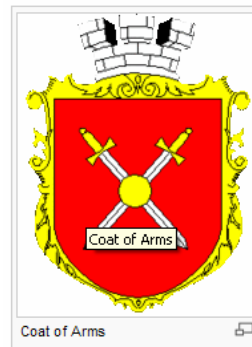
All ghettos had the most appalling, inhuman living conditions. The smallest ghetto housed approximately 3,000 people. Warsaw, the largest ghetto, held 400,000 people. Lodz, the second largest, held about 160,000. Other Polish cities with large Jewish ghettos included Bialystok, Czestochowa, Kielce, Krakow, Lublin, Lvov, Radom, and Vilna.

1941 Many of the ghetto dwellers were from the local area. Others were from neighboring villages. In October 1941, general deportations began from Germany to major ghettos in Poland and further east. Also, Jews from Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia were sent to the ghettos.

Ghetto life was wretched. The ghettos were filthy, with poor sanitation. Extreme overcrowding forced many people to share a room. Disease was rampant. Staying warm was difficult during bitter cold winters without adequate warm clothes and heating fuel. Food was in such short supply that many slowly starved to death.

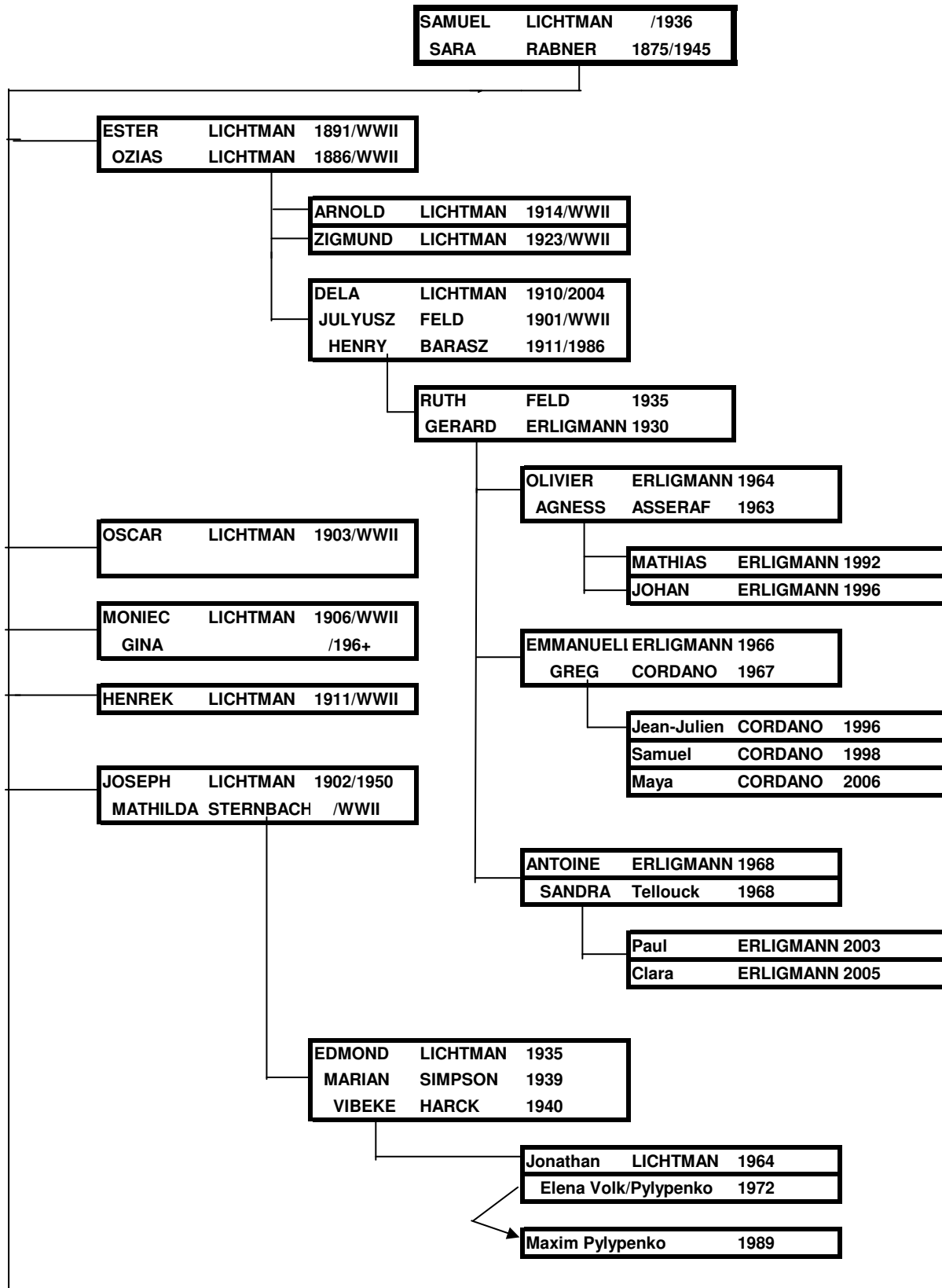
(2) **Dobromil** - Population: 5,000 (2001)

The settlement was mentioned for the first time in 1374. It was founded by the family of Herburt, upon request of Polish prince Wladyslaw Opolczyk. In 1566 it was granted town rights by the King Sigismund the Old, eighteen years later Stanislaw Herburt constructed there a castle. Until 1772 (see: Partitions of Poland) it was part of Poland. Then it passed to Austria, and in 1918 again became part of Poland, located in the Low Voivodeship. On September 1, 1939 Germany invaded the western part of Poland. The Soviets occupied the Eastern part (including Dobromil).



(3) **"Dobromil – Life in a Galician Shtetle 1890-1907"** by Saul Miller. Loewenthal Press 1980

Lichtman Family Tree



LEON LICHTMAN 1901/WWII
RAHELA Jakubowicz 1909/1984

ROMAN LICHTMAN 1933/2006
EMIL LICHTMAN 1937

ZIGMUND LICHTMAN 1897/WWII
MLLE KRYSTIANPC /WWII

CYLA LICHTMAN /WWII
ZYLO LICHTMAN /WWII

MANIA LICHTMAN 1897/1969
SALOMON BARANENKC /WWII

IRENE BARANENKC 1923/WWII

LILIAN BARANENKC 1926/1993
RALPH MATALON 1921/1994

TERRY MATALON 1953
SANDI HOFFMAN 1953

SHANNA MATALON 1986
JOSHUA MATALON 1988

VIVIENNE MATALON 1956
EDWARD MATALON 1958

ARTHUR BARON 1920/2001
ROSE SPUNGIN 1917/1990

SUSAN BARON 1948
DAVID GREY 1944

DANIEL GREY 1973
MIRIAM GREY 1975
JONATHAN GREY 1984

